

Stories of Sūrah Al-Kahf in Islamic Miniatures

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Abstract

The research aims to recognize the influence of mentioned historical stories at Quran on the artistic thoughts of the miniaturists in Islamic Manuscripts of medieval epoch and later 17th century. Questioning if all four fundamental narrations of Sūrah Al-kahf had illuminated on papers of manuscripts or not, with giving chosen examples of miniatures explaining their details, investigating the compatibility of those details with divine text at verses of the Sūrah.

The verses presented 4 main narrations; theme of The Companions of the Cave "Ashabu Al-Kahf" that leis between verses 9 –26, theme of the rich and the poor or the owner of 2 gardens that leis between verses 32 – 44, theme of Moses and Al-Al-Khidr that leis between verses 60–82, theme of Dhul-Qar-nayn with Gog and Magog between verses 83–98 from the same Sūrah. Although Sūrah Al kahf has another 5th story of Iblis and Adam but this one is already repeated more times in other verses and chapters while the above 4 mentioned ones are only appeared across verses of Sūrah Alkahf which is the main topic of this article.

Not only previous investigations had been introduced stories of Quran, but also full versions of manuscripts presented with Prophets' narrations like Syir Al-nabi¹ and manuscript of Falnameh². While it is assured that no research focusing on stories of Sūrah Al-kahf, as it has been enjoyed various advantages and remarkable rewards at Muslim belief which gave it especial promotion on social thoughts and traditions.

This encourages otherwise discussing history of Qur'an texts' reception and presentation through gate of Islamic miniature in the mentality of Muslim miniaturists in the medieval epoch.

Study bases on verses of the sūrah narrating those stories and illustrated manuscripts gave the interest to its episodes with analyzing its compatibility with the divine texts.

Keywords: Quran, Sūrah Al-kahf, Islamic Miniatures, Illustrated Manuscripts, Islamic painting, Art History, Historical stories, Religious texts.

Introduction

Usually Historical stories tell us something about real things that happened in the past where all Quran' stories are from this type. Story of sons of Adams is an example of factual story. Dramatic means it could happen any time, Stories of Sūrah Al-Kahf as well has the same significance. The Qur'an aims to use it as a teaching method must not be too removed from everyday life; it must be directed to the people everywhere, not too lengthy and foster positive attitudes. Stories of Sūrah Al-Kahf is distinguished by its direct message to learn lessons, wisdom and morals from what happened in the past and to build avidness of Allah oneness (Abu-Aleneen, 1985: P.122) (Ahmed, 1980: P.134) (Hamadi, 1987: P.60).

There are many types of stories: historical, factual and dramatic. The Qur'an employs all these techniques, Stories in the Qur'an are not based upon imagination; rather they are the actual state of affairs in which the people lived. (Maki, 1990: P.73).

¹ One of the most important illustrated manuscripts refers to the biography of prophet Mohamed and stories of Quran, it has many copies around the world like the one which belongs to Chester Beatty library in Dublin and others (Alaine :Cheaster Beatty, 2009).

² Falnameh means the book of the kings, and it's an illustrated manuscript tells stories of kings and religious stories in History (Grube: Muslim Miniature, 1962).

The chapters of Qur'an, generally, have a special way of presenting its stories that depends on repeating a single account several times like the one of Moses and Pharaoh as a very clear example, which aims to connect and reconcile the subject with the details. This might also be to bring out the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. Arabic Knowledge is required to fully appreciate this aspect of the Qur'an. On the contradictory, stories that were mentioned in Sūrah Al-Kahf are never repeated in other chapters and verses of the Quran.

Stories in Sūrah Al-Kahf, as all ones mentioned in Quran, are drawn from actual historical events and put in an eloquent, beautiful style with the most appropriate choice of Arabic words, what makes its influence is enough strong to all Muslims. (Al-Qubaesi, 2003 : P.82).

Four main stories are introduced in the Qur'an as the following:

- Stories related to incidents which took place in the life of Prophet Muhammad such as: his Ascension to the heavens (al-Mi'raj), the migration to Madena (Hijrah), the Battles of Badr, Uhud, Hunayn, and others (Jabar, 1998: P.90).
- Stories of the previous prophets and messengers like Noah, Abraham, Moses telling about their miracles with which these prophets were sent, their mission to their people, the resistance of their opponents, the stages of the mission and its evolution, the reward of the believers, and the fate of the disbelievers (Abas, 2000 : P.88).
- Stories about what happened to previous nations, and some pious individuals who were not prophets like, dwellers or companions of the Cave.
- Stories about different creatures like the ant which talked with Prophet Solomon (Abu Sherakh, 2005: P.121).

By searching in stories of Sūrah Al-Kahf, it's found that its verses contain meanings and significances that human beings need to regulate their lives and to succeed in life after death. The Qur'an in general contains regulations, morals, creed and prophets' stories (Zedan 1976: P.136).

Stories in of Sūrah Al-Kahf consist of the state of previous nations like Gog and Magog Story, past prophets like Moses and Al-Khidr story, and the events that took place while the Qur'an was being revealed. The Qur'an relates many incidents of the past, mentions different lands and ruins (Al-Hashemi, 1981: P.23).

Qur'an neither presents the stories as narrative history nor brings the chronological orders of events because it is far from the objective that the Qur'an is trying to achieve. Sūrah Al-Kahf has a clear example supports this view, is the story of the Dwellers of the Cave (As-habul Kahf) which is about a group of young men whom Allah guided to faith and who escaped from their enemies because they might have forced them to revert to disbelief. The Qur'an does not mention their names, how many they were, or what was their nation or tribe (Abdoo, 2000: P.101).

Sūrah Al Kahf

It is Meccan chapter with the exception of some verses. Its name "al-Kahf" is derived from verse nine in which the word al-Kahf appeared. (Qur'an, 18:9).

The Sūrah, under study, contained one hundred and ten verses (110), one thousand five hundred and seventy seven (1577) words as well as six thousand three hundred and sixty (6360) letters. (Maududi, P. 437-9)

The verses of the Sūrah nearly end with letter Lam as a peculiar pattern for it. In addition to this, the word al-Kahf appeared in the Sūrah under review four times (Qur'an, 18:9, 10, 11, 16) and was given different meanings. In one of such meanings al-Kahf means a cave which is a hole in the mountain and specifically refers to a cave in a mountain where young men (As'hab al-Kahf) sought refuge. (Ibn Kathīr, 2000: P. 75)

An Islamic scholar, Ad-Dahhak, is of the view that al-Kahf is a cave in the valley, while Shu'aib al-Jiba'i stated that this cave, al-Kahf, was called 'Haizam' (Ibn Kathīr, 2000: P.78-81). Many things were said concerning this, but we should note that the actual knowledge regarding this Cave rests only with Allah, who knows the best.

Stories of Sūrah Al Kahf and Its Miniatures

Sūrah al Kahf contains five vivid and dramatic narratives that make it read and sound more like a dynamic storybook filled with dialogue, imagery and action, than a plethora of commands, injunctions, or doctrine. Except for the telling of the Iblīs the Rebel story (Quran, 18:50)¹, are distinguished by the fact that they are not repeated elsewhere in the Qur'ān, as many other narratives are. So that I will concentrate on the main four stories that not repeated in all chapters of Quran and related strongly to Sūrah Al Kahf itself; those four stories are:

1) The Companions of the Cave

The story of the companions of the cave is about a group of young people, about three or five or seven, who were in their teen ages, Quran counted them by giving three probabilities of being three or five or seven while their dog was counted separately in Quran verses at each time, with being seven is the most probable view as Ibn Abass claimed (Ibn Katheer, part1: 113-116) Allah says about them what can be translated as, "Surely they were young men who believed in their Lord, and we increased them in guidance." (Qur'an, 18: 13).

They lived in a disbelieving town, so they decided to migrate for the sake of Allah and run away. -Allah rewards them with mercy in the cave and protection from the sun - They woke up and found the entire village believers. (Ṭabarī, 15:126)

The Young Men of the Cave is the main story of Sūrah al-kahf, and it gives its name to the sūrah itself. The story, also known as the Sleepers of Ephesus, is an ancient pre Christian legend according to some scholars, which occurred under the reign of Emperor Decius. Many of these exegetes rely on Christian and Jewish sources in their interpretation of the story (Gibbon London, 1920: P.220)²

It's considered the main story of the Sūrah in minds and hearts of Muslims who are used to read it every Friday and listening to its narratives. Thus, Islamic miniaturists were influenced by this fact and gave an interest to its episodes.

This story was widely spread because it was narrated to people in purpose of teaching them various morals related to religion like believing in Allah is the reason for the miracle the sleepers experienced. The main moral of this narration in Quran is the faith of people of the Cave, and how the strength is not in numbers or resources but in one's connection, with Allah who gives it to those who are sincere to him (Ibn Katheer, part1: 114).

The Master of the two Gardens

This illustrative narrative of this story does not convey factual history; the characters portrayed in the story are not presumed to be real historical characters but rather fictitious characters designed for a moral lesson. In other words, The narrative was meant to make an 'example,' a 'mathal' (مثال) out of two such groups, depicted generically as believers and nonbelievers, through an illustrative story that ultimately aims to warn the disbelieving.

¹ It's repeated seven times at different chapters of the Quran; (2:34, 7:11, 15:31, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:75)

² Details of this story and its pre Christian and Christian context are documented, according to old Syriac traditions, in the work of Edward Gibbon. (Gibbon London: 1920: P.220)

The narration which lies between verses 31 and 44 of Sūrah Alkahf conveys a story about two neighbors. One of them is a boastful disbelieving man who has been granted two fertile gardens, and the other a poorer believing neighbor, fearful of God, who tries to warn his neighbor of his arrogance. Its greater theme is the ephemeral reality of worldly goods, God's omniscient power over human affairs, and most importantly that God is the *alwalī* الولي 'The Protector'.

The story of owner of Two Gardens aims to the moral of wealth definitely, and from its lessons is that Allah tests people by taking from them and also by giving to them, The unthankful gardener failed to realize that all of his success was from Allah and in Allah's control, it's needed to thank Allah for every little thing in our life.

2) The Journey of Moses with Al-Khiḍr

Between verses 60 to 82 of Sūrah Alkahf, Allah tells the story of Moses seeking knowledge from a mysterious unknown person, identified as alKhiḍr. Moses accompanies him on a journey in which he witnesses a number of bewildering events; the damaging of a ship, the killing of a boy, and the restoration of a broken wall, which perplex Moses and causes him to break his oath of patience and obedience.

Ibn Kathīr cites a different version of this hadith in his Tafsīr, which introduces the name of the alKhiḍr that is not mentioned in the Qur'ānic text and establishes that he is someone more knowledgeable than Moses. (Ibn Kathīr, 2000: 3-120).

This story aims to knowledge through al Al-Khiḍr's lessons to Moses; he taught him how the divine Wisdom can sometimes be hidden in matters which perceived as bad. Form the morals from this story as well that reality has two versions: a version we see and a version that is from the wisdom of Allah, and There is nothing as pure evil, everything that seems evil always has good which outweighs that evil.

3) Story of Dhū lQarnayn.

It was mentioned in the sūrah across verses 83-98, it's a story of the great King that was given knowledge and power and was going around the world helping people and spreading all that's good. He was able to overcome the problem of Yajooj-Majooj and build a massive dam with the help of people whom he could not even understand. The story targets to learn power does not corrupt the one who wants to please Allah, and the true gratitude for having power is to help others

It is an elaborate story comprising three main episodes about a famous conqueror who, assisted by God, achieves many feats. The most important being the construction of a wall to protect an endangered community from its oppressors.

A great deal of attention has centered on the historical identification of Dhū l Qarnayn and the origins of his appellation that often gets literally translated into "The Two Horned One."

AlTha'labī provides the most curious of readers with exhaustive details about the historical identification of Dhū l Qarnayn in his 'Arā'is, whom he, and the majority of classical exegetes, believes is the Macedonian Alexander the Great (al Tha'labī, 'Arā'is : P. 605) (Al Zamakhsharī, alKashshāf, 3:84.)

The compelling reason put forth by commentators is that he was the only man recorded in history to have ruled such vastness, from east to west.

There are however many other scholars, such as Mawdūdī and Asad, who do not believe that Dhū lQarnayn was Alexander the Great because of the notion that the Qur'ānic story emphasizes the strong faith of Dhū lQarnayn, which does not match the historical narrations about

Alexander. They hold Dhū lQarnayn to have been a pious ruler whose exact historical identity is as important as the lessons to be learned from this just and pious ruler (Asad, P.664) (Mawdudī : 5-127)

Stories in the Islamic Miniatures:

Islamic miniaturists influenced strongly by stories of Quran and prophet's narrations in the religious production of miniatures which had been affected by callas of prohibitions In Islam. Such calls were gradually disappeared by the growing up of chii schools of art which allowed those topics and encouraged artists to document their religious history. Those artists affected in all following schools of art in the epoch medieval and later centuries.

Influence of Sūrah al kahf is enough different because the sūrah occupies a remarkable position in the Islamic belief in general; majority of Muslims all over the history used to read this sūrah every Friday according to a famous Hadith of prophet Mohamed that he said:

“Whoever reads Sūrah al Kahf on the night of Jummah, will have a light that will stretch between him and the Ancient House (Kabah).” (al-Targheeb wa'l-Tarheeb, 1/298).

This hadith shows the power of the Sūrah when recited on Friday night. The hadith shows that the Sūrah brings light to the reader and the stretch of the light covers the area between Kabaa and the reader and gets hold of such magnanimous mercy and blessings. This belief helped a lot in the spread of its stories to be part of customs and traditions the Islamic society, and thus the Islamic art had been influenced.

In this Article some samples of miniatures are chosen to see how the artist translates his understanding to those stories into miniatures, and which episodes of those stories they were interested in, with analysis his choice and giving depictions for such one of the chosen work to check its compatibility with the mentioned story in the verses itself as it's explained shortly above.

Miniatures of the companions of the Cave

The story of the companions of the cave occupies a clear interest in the mentality of the Muslim Miniaturists by being the most presented episode of the Sūrah Alkahf in Islamic miniatures. From those examples a folio from manuscript Qisis Al anbyaa "prophets' stories" which is preserved in National Library in Paris, and dates back to 1581 and shows the companions while sleeping in the cave (plate 1). The illustration is divided into 2 main parts, the upper one reflecting the normal life outside the cave that referred by a dialogue of 2 horses men with other 2 people. While the scone in the bottom refers to the cave itself and he illuminated the youth inside a s seven.

The same manuscript introduced the bottom scene of the previous mentioned miniature in an independent one where the cave occupies the whole area of the illustrations (plate 2). The Turkish features of the 2 miniatures are clear enough to drive them to the Turkish school of art due to the artistic features of facial features, clothes designs, head covers, and colors distributing and brightness.

Those 2 examples presents the main argument of this story which is usually runs around the number of the companions which should be presented in their cave; always they were seven in all found illustrations related to Islamic Art. Although in the text of the Sūrah itself, it's not mentioned that they are seven, it's just a probable between others ones were mentioned in the Quran text, the text doesn't give a fixed number for them in the cave. (Quran, 18:22).

By reviewing the Islamic Sources of interpretations around this verse concern their number, the majority of found opinions relayed on Ibn Abass' view¹ which confirms that they were seven. (AlShokani, Fath Al Kadeer, part 1, P.285).

It's difficult to believe that Muslim illustrators had this reference of Ibn Abass's view to know their number, and in this same time it's not costumed narration by historical society traditions that they are seven, due to the obvious text of in Quran which explains clearly that they are three or five or seven. It's probable that the miniaturists affected by the Christian story of Seven Sleepers of Ephesus², which has an enough similarity with the same episode of the story in Islamic belief, but the story of the Christian tradition gave a fixed number for those group of youths who hide inside a cave outside the city of Ephesus in the 3rd century to escape a religious persecution and emerge 300 years later (Liuzza, R.M.: P.66)

This story in the Christian tradition was appeared in the Christian art in several examples of miniatures like this one appeared in the Illuminated manuscript from Menologion of Basil II.s which is preserved in Vatican Library (Ms. Vat. gr., 1613) and appears the seven sleepers in their cave (Plate 3)³ imitating those miniatures in Islamic manuscripts. The Christian influence on the Islamic art is common between researchers and scholars which makes this probable is enough credible (Elassal. Aniconism, 2017: P.50).

The story is appeared with the same details and the same number seven of the companions in the cave in another copy manuscript Qisis Al anbyaa "prophets' stories" which is preserved in National Library in New York, and dates back to 1577 (Plate 4), the miniature which is similar to the one of plate 2 by occupying the cave and its sleepers the main area of whole illustrations. The artist succeeded in painting their sleeping position by different directions of bodies and heads, the variety of colors and clothes influenced positively in the attraction to their positions. Coloring seems to be the master point in the illustration; it extended to the rocks of the cave itself.

The story wasn't only appeared in the copies of manuscript Qisis Al anbyaa, but it was also appeared more than one time in the manuscript of Falnameh, the book that gave interest usually to the stories and history of kings (Tharwat Okasha, P.154)

The story appeared in a folio from manuscript Falnameh which is preserved in Metropolitan Museum in New York, and dates back to XVI century (Plate 5), where the artist concentrate on their various positions in the cave with brilliant colors matching with the Maghul-Indian school of art that the miniatures belong to, the artist keen to show the life outside the cave like the scene of (Plate 1) by refereeing to people's talk, while the youth are drawn in sleep as the story mentioned in the text of the Sūrah.

Another folio from manuscript Falnameh which is preserved in Topqabusray Museum in Istanbul, and dates back to 1570 (Plate 6) referring to same details without any differences, especially in their numbers which always are sevens.

The Xvi century is distinguished by its richness of religious miniatures that interested in stories of prophets and stories of Quran in general, while the xv century was considered an early period of religious illustrations' production. Although this fact, a representation of such story is found belong to xv century like that one of a folio from unknown manuscript which is preserved in Topqabusray Museum in Istanbul, and dates back to XV century, belonging to Tebriz, and

¹ Abd Allah ibn Abbas, was born 619 A.D. He was the son of Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, an uncle of the prophet Muhammad. He was one of Muhammad's cousins and one of the early Qur'an scholars (Ludwig 2009: P.134.).

² It is an ancient Greek city , it was built in the 10th century BC. (Hawkins 2009: P. 73–83.)

³ http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1613/0143?sid=a7590df9b8aca22111c8359533716419&zoomlevel=4

follows the Turkish school of art (Plate 7), where the features are quite different from the previous representation especially of the facial features and non-equal body proportions with the head size as an earlier production of Islamic miniatures.

The fixed number seven of the companions could be resumed through the Islamic miniatures around this story, moreover the wide production of the story in Muslim illustrations to be the most illustrated one through the four mentioned in the sūrah, through the XVI century, and few ones belonged to the earlier century.

On the other hand, Islamic miniaturists affected clearly by Islamic narration with the existence of the dog in all miniatures matching with Quran mention, while in the Christian art it's not illustrated because it's ignored in the text, which could be interpreted as the miniaturists affected by their number in the Christian theory and with the dog mention in the qur'anic verses. The dog is clearly appeared in the cave in plates 1,2,4,5, and 6 while it's disappeared in the Christian one in plate 3.

Miniatures of Master of two gardens

Not all mentioned stories in texts of Quran, were illustrated in Islamic manuscripts, it seems that the story of Master of two gardens of Sūrah Alkahf is one of them. Usually the miniaturists gave an interest to stories that were mentioned in Quran, but his interest wasn't equal for all stories; for example Miraj's representations are shown on a large scale in Islamic illuminations, on the other, not much miniatures were found for the Exodus scene of Prophet Moses. With comparing the 2 scenes in Quran verses, not much difference was obvious between their numbers.

The Importance of Quran events wasn't due to its mention in Quran or not, but usually refers to interest of first generations of miniaturists in XIV and XIII centuries who led the following schools of Paintings in the epoch medieval.

Prophets as well, their stories weren't illustrated with the same scale in Islamic paintings; the one of Prophet Joseph didn't enjoy with the same concern comparing with stories of prophet Ibrahim for example. Till episodes of the same story weren't equal in its painting production like comparing the episode of Joseph with Zulikha which is represented widely in miniatures, and the episode of the famine which is illustrated in few paintings.

The reference of artists weren't Quran itself, but was narrative traditional stories and interest of first generations of painters and illustrators which grow up, often, in Shii environment at Timurid and Safavid states. The spread of those stories in literature books and manuscripts helped to enlarge its narrations and representations like Joseph and Zulikha which wrote in several copies of manuscripts around the world.

The story of Master of 2 gardens in sūrah al Kahf suffered from same reasons, it was neglected by artists because literature's references didn't pay attention to the story. Moreover, didn't mentioned in texts of manuscripts' version as a narrative story like the one of companions of the cave, and didn't be in the priority of the master generations of miniaturists of Iran in the XIII and XIV centuries, what made the artists of the epoch medieval didn't keen to repeat them later where the religious production of miniatures was flourished.

By searching in Hadiths and Shii sources, no mention for the story was found, and no similar stories were known in Christianity as a probable influence on Islamic art. All those reasons and motivations feed neglecting of this story in the production of the Islamic Miniatures.

Miniatures of the Journey of Moses and Al-Khiḍr

As the story is narrated in Sūrah Alkahf, the character of el Al-Khiḍr is represented mainly as Moses' instructor. Although his name is not mentioned in the text of any verses, but it was well known between historians and Quran commenters that this mysterious guide is el Al-Khiḍr. According to different hadiths were reported to prophet Mohamed. Like this hadith is narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri by Abu Ya'la in his Musnad (2:332) and al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak (1984 ed. 4:581=orig. ed. 4:537) also Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari (1959 ed. 13:104).

In the Qur'an the story begins by Moses' declaration to his servant/companion that "I will not give up till I reach the confluence of two oceans".(18:60 Qur'ān. translation of Ahmed Ali. 255.). Moses and Joshua had begun to search for "a servant of Allah" from whom Moses was to learn the 'secret knowledge given him by God. Muslim tradition and hadiths reported to the prophet identifies this "servant" as Khiḍr¹.

Miniaturists gave interest to Al-Khiḍr in Islamic manuscripts; apart from his position of the story of Moses at sūrah Alkahf, he was introduced in Islamic miniatures as the mysterious guide and immortal saint in popular Islamic lore, he was appeared in works related to Sufism as well. (Elassal 2013: P.332-343)

The story introduces 3 main characters; Prophet Moses, Al Al-Khiḍr, and the servant Boy of Moses referring to Joshua². Islamic Miniaturists have been introduced various episodes in the story of Moses, including the one of lessons had given by al Al-Khiḍr in Sūrah Alkahf.

To understand how the Muslim artists gave an imagination to al Al-Khiḍr, it's necessary to explore examples of his description at miniatures in Islamic illuminated manuscripts. His name means "the Verdant One" so the miniaturists painted him in several times with green garments, and he played in their mentality a pivotal role in Islamic mysticism (Ayoub, 1989: P. 33-34; 65b.)

The influence of his story at sūrah al kahf is appeared clearly in miniatures 'production like the folio representing him while giving lessons to a Muslim in the manuscript of Khisrw and Dehlwi manuscript copy which is preserved in Egyptian National Library in Cairo (144- Persian literature), he is represented in the Timurid illustration with features of prophets like the divine halo which surrounds his head, moreover his heavy white beard and garment. The influence of sūrah al kahf is clear in representing him while guiding other person in the same scene with life wisdom (Plate 8).

He has been identified with a variety of names and titles; some say Khiḍr is a title; others have called it an epithet. He has been associated as the Muslim "version of Elijah" and also referred to as the eternal wanderer (Hessen, 1982: P. 17-18).

His association with prophet Ilyas (Elias) was appeared in several illustrations from Islamic manuscripts like a miniature from manuscript Khamsa) by Nizami, from Shirazand dates back to 1548 A.D. shows Al-Khiḍr and the prophet Ilyas (Elias) at the Fountain of Life (Plate 9). This subject which is repeated in several illustrations related to eal al-Khiḍr while associating with prophet Ilyas; another miniature Folio from a khamsa Nizami represents The prophet Elias and Al-Khiḍr at the fountain of life, dating to late 15th century. Folio from a khamsa, following the artist features of Timurid period, is preserved at The Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution (Plate 10). Both Miniatures connecting al Al-Khiḍr with the prophet Ilyas by being the 2

¹ Khiḍr is spelled in several ways: al-Khadir (in Oriental/German scholarship), Khezr and Khizr (in Persian and Indian accounts) and so on.

²Joshua is not mentioned by name in the Qur'ān, but his name appears in other Islamic literature, he is mentioned as a prophet in Ibn Kathir's Stories of the prophets (Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. XI, p. 351)

immortal prophets on Earth as Ibn Kathir mentioned ((Ibn Kathir: Part 1, P.123-132). This immortality which had become since he drank the water of life, he is described as the one who has found the source of life, 'the Eternal Youth', Al-Khiḍr was the mysterious guide and immortal saint in the popular Islamic piety (Schimmel Dimensions, 1975: P.106) (Corbin, Creative Imagination, 1982: P.56.).

According to Islamic some writings and beliefs, Khiḍr is one of the four prophets whom the Islamic tradition recognizes as being 'alive' or 'immortal', the other three are being Idris (Enoch), Ilyas (Elias), and 'Isa (Jesus) (Schimmel. Dimensions 1975: P.202).

Khiḍr is immortal because he drank from the water of life. There are some who have asserted, however, that this Khiḍr is the same person as Elijah (Ibn Kathir, Bedyā welnehaya: Part 1, P.123-132)

Paintings of Al-Khiḍr in Islamic miniatures had been affected by such argument, and had been influenced as well by theories connecting Al-Khiḍr with Ilyas, although there were no relations between them in the right Islamic belief.

The color green has also been related to Khiḍr's disappearing 'into the "green landscape' after departing from Moses like his garment which is appeared in (plate 9) as an example. (Knappert. Islamic Legends 1985:P.116).

The Miniaturists reacted positively in their mention of Al-Khiḍr by his episode with Dū al-qarnayn, owner of the fourth story of Sūrah al akhaf, by the consideration of being al-Khiḍr as his minister as early Islamic historians claimed. Dū al-qarnayn who is identified strongly in the Muslim tradition with Alexander the great although there's neither mention nor referring in Quran concern this identification.

Variety of illustrations was found relating between Al-Khiḍr and Dū al-qarnayn or Alexander the great like a folio from manuscript Khamsa Nizami which is preserved in Walters museum, where Al-Khiḍr is shown with his famous green garment riding his horse, his face is accompanied by a divine halo, while Alexander the great is shown with his army behind the hills waiting the arrival of his vizir (Plate 11). Another illustration from the same copy of manuscript presents Al-Khiḍr and Ilyas with Alexander the great at the fountain of life and immortality (Plate 12).

All previous models of representations for Al-Khiḍr in artistic mentality of miniaturists are exploring the highly interest to the character of Al-Khiḍr and influences of sūrah al kahf which mentions him as the spiritual guide To Moses and his servant in the different episodes of the story.

The miniaturists didn't give their interest and concern to the episodes of story as they are mentioned at Sūrah al kahf with the three different narrations of events and lessons that Al-Khiḍr taught them to Prophet Moses, but they were affected by the literature narrations and Muslim traditions which associated al al-Khiḍr to prophet Ilyas and mentioned widely his foundation of immortality with Alexander the Great.

By investigating in the majority of miniatures that illustrated and presented Al-Khiḍr, No mention nearly to one of the episode of Sūrah al kahf story with Moses, till the only one found introduces al-Khiḍr in a boat as the Sūrah mentions didn't have any appearance for Moses, this one of the manuscript Divan which is related to 14th century and preserved at by Walters Art Museum, shows Khiḍr while safely guides the boat to shore with any existence for any episode of the sūrah. (Plate 13)

Miniatures of the Dū al-qarnayn

As it was mentioned before that Quran didn't determine and personalize character of Dū al-qarnayn, but Islamic Miniaturists followed the probability of being Alexander the great due to the narrations of literature and ancient Muslim resources which mentioned story of Alexander the great associating him with Dū al-qarnayn.

Miniatures indicate to this Story focused on illumination of Alexander the great while building the dam with representations of people of Gog and magog, which reflects the clear influence of Sūrah alkahf in the production of this story in Islamic illustrations.

Alexander and the wall are appeared in a folio from manuscript Falnameh which is preserved in Chester Beatty library in Dublin, and dates back to XVI century (Plate 14).

The miniaturists concentrate on strange descriptive to people of Gog and Magog as unfamiliar creatures as in this depiction, Alexander the great in his throne meeting the 2 prophets Al al-Khidr and Ilyas, while those creatures of Gog and Magog building the dam.

It seems that the miniaturists didn't follow the details of the story, or didn't care about it, so his confusion appeared by representing people of Gog and Magog while participating in building the dam while it should be built to separate the believers from those people, as verses indicate. But this position isn't repeated in another miniature from the 14th century from Unknown manuscript preserved at Saint Petersburg museum shows Alexander and the wall (plat 15), where the dam is built and separating the believers from those naked people who refer to Gog and Magog people.

People of Gog and Magog were symbolized as devil power in the belief of Muslim miniaturists, apart from their representations as unfamiliar creatures with strange features, the achieved victory upon them was a symbol of power and proudness, like the imagination miniature that described Imam Ali while Fighting Gog and Magog, in a folio from manuscript Hyader Nameh¹ which is preserved in National Library In Cairo, and dates back to XVII century (Plate 16), where Dū al-qarnayn isn't depicted at all, Just Imam Ali the owner of the extra power as the text of this manuscript describes him, he is represented while kill those people by his legendary sword. Their bodies and features were appeared in this scene unfamiliar as well, with large ears where they can set upon them, and other mythological description.

This concept of consideration those people of Gog and Magog as an evil power, is a clear influence of sūrah al kahf on the Islamic illustrations, although Imam Ali is never had met those people, but the artist imagined that his power able to beat them such as Dū al-qarnayn which is matching with the core of the manuscript of Hayder Nameh itself.

Like the story of Moses and Al-khidr, the miniaturists didn't follow all details of their episodes, but they clearly were influenced by their narrations at Sūrah alkahf; they focused at Gog and Magog neglecting other details and features.

Conclusion

Sūrah Al kahf is chosen for this article for its four main stories that never are repeated in all chapters and verses of Quran. Those four ones had been dominating on thoughts of Muslims allover Islamic states due to importance of this Sūrah in all Islamic narrations. The article introduces an analysis for those stories through Islamic illustrations and miniatures which well known that they are the real mirror of Islamic History. It was enough important to discover the influences of such stories on the artistic mentality of miniaturists, and responding the famous argument debate if they referenced to Quran in their works or they depended on texts of

¹ This manuscript is studeied by Sherien El Sayed in thesis of PhD at university of Ain Shams, it had 94 miniatures, while she referred to only 30 ones.(Elsayed, S. Hayder: P. 12-240)

manuscripts and literature where they have been illuminated in between. 16 chosen illustrations were studied from different manuscripts preserved in various libraries all over the world, its details were matched with the text of Quran and different interpretations are introduced to analyze this production related to Sūrah alkahf, leaving artistic feature analysis. The Study presents the following conclusion items:

First: Clear absence of religious reference of Quran in illustrating its stories in Islamic Manuscript with the application on Sūrah Alkahf and its narrative episodes through:

(1) Fixing the number of the companions of the cave in all miniatures and illumination to be seven although the mentions of different probabilities in the verse no.21 of Sūrah alkahf like being three or five. But always they are counted seven in Islamic miniatures, what could be interpreted as a western influence of the seven sleepers story in western literature.

On the other hand, illuminating the dog in all representations of this story refers to the Quran as a reference in that point, apart from counting seven companions as a basic feature of the narration in all illuminations.

(2) Ignorance of different three episodes of the spiritual teaching trip of Moses and alkhidr, with focusing on representing al khidr as a symbol of immortality by drinking from the fountain of life accompanying prophet Ilyas, moreover his representation as the vizier of Alexander the great. These all topics that are never mentioned in any of Quran verses. Reflexing the position of Alexander the great in the European sources..

(3) Personalizing character of Dū al-qarnayn by associating him with Alexander the great in all found depictions related to the story, although variety of historical opinions around him.

(4) Full deficiency of the story of "master of the gardens" although it occupies a great attention in the verses of the Sūrah. That could be analyzed by the absence of this story in Literature and classic literally productions of manuscripts.

Second: Influences of the narrative stories of Sūrah al kahf are obviously existed in depictions of Islamic miniatures related to their episodes. This is clearly noticed through illustrations of Dū al-qarnayn where the miniaturists were affected by consideration people of Gog and Magog as an evil power through representing them out of story details.

Third: Story of The companions of the cave enjoys with the highest interest in miniatures' production, although story of Master of the garden suffers of shortage's production in painted Islamic manuscripts.

Fourth: Exploring the probability of existence for influences on topics of Sūrah al kahf in Islamic miniatures by western Christian narrations especially in the 2 stories of companions of the cave which is identified with seven sleepers' narrative story, and Dū al-qarnayn who always was associated in both forging resources and Islamic paintings by Alexander the great.

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IL.3- Seven Sleepers in their cave, manuscript Menologion of Basil II.s , Vatican Library (Ms. Vat. gr. 1613) , XVII century



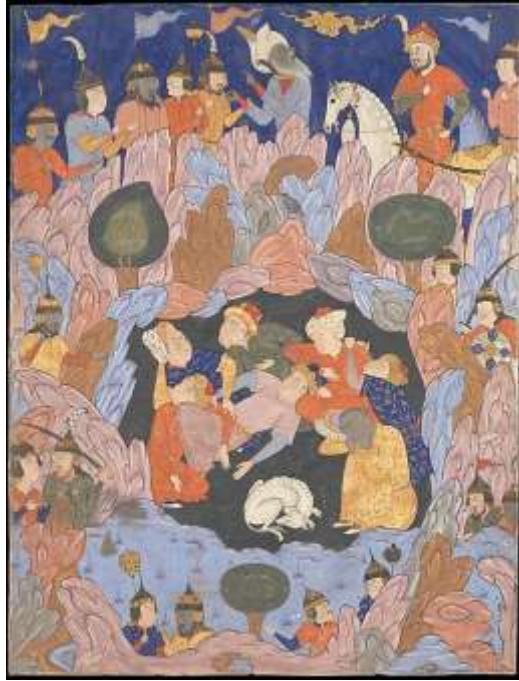
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IL.12- Khidr and Ilyas with Alexander the great at the fountain of life. A Folio from manuscript Khamsa Nizami , Walters Art museum.



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IL.13- Al-Khiḍr in a boat guiding people to a shore, A folio from manuscript Divan, 14th century, Walters Art Museum.



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